REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Claims 46-58 are pending in this application. Claims 18-45 are canceled by the present response and claims 46-58 are added by the present response. Claims 18-33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. patent 5,625,757 to Kageyama et al. (herein "Kageyama") in view of U.S. patent 5,603,060 to Weinberger et al. (herein "Weinberger"). Claims 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30, 31, and 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. patent 5,768,516 to Sugishima in view of Weinberger. Claims 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, and 33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Sugishima in view of Weinberger as applied to claims 18 and 26, and further in view of U.S. patent 5,991,846 to Ooki. Claims 34-45 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kageyama in view of Weinberger. Claims 34, 36, 37, 39, 40, 42, 43, and 45 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Sugishima in view of Weinberger. Claims 35, 38, 41, and 44 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Sugishima in view of Weinberger as applied to claims 34, 37, 40, and 43, and further in view of Ooki.

Addressing each of the outstanding rejections, each of the outstanding rejections is traversed by the present response.

Initially, applicants note claims 18-45 are canceled by the present response without prejudice and new claims 46-58 are presented for examination. New claims 46-58 are deemed to be self-evident from the original disclosure, and thus are not deemed to raise any issues of new matter.

From features recited in the claims as currently written, a user on a client computer can select a desired printer from among a plurality of printers via a server in an network. In the selection of the desired printer, the user can primarily select desired print features from

10

among a predetermined set of basic print capabilities that are indicated to the user (see as a non-limiting example Figures 8 and 9 in the present specification). That subject matter is reflected for example in new claim 46 as currently written with respect to the "sending means for sending to said client computer a predetermined set of basic print capabilities pertinent to said plurality of image forming apparatuses", and as similarly recited in the other independent claims.

Based on the user-selected print features, the server performs a search for printers satisfying the desired selected print features from among the plurality of printers. That feature is reflected for example by the "search means for performing a search for at least one desired image forming apparatus satisfying said primary print function selection instruction from among said plurality of image forming apparatuses", as recited in new independent claim 46 and as similarly recited in the other independent claims. That subject matter is also noted in the present specification for example at page 26, line 14 *et seq.*

As a result of the search, the server sends a list of printers satisfying the desired print features to the client computer for the user to select a most desirable printer. User selection of a most desirable printer on the client computer causes the server to transmit information items associated with image forming inherent in the most desirable printer selected by the user to the client computer. Such information items sent from the server are displayed on the client computer for the user to enter user instructions relative to the displayed information items in accordance with the user's desire for printing. That subject matter is reflected in the claims for example in the "outputting means" of claim 46 and in similar features in the other independent claims.

At such a stage desired print features, such as a print number, can be entered from the client computer so that the client computer sends a print execution command including the desired print features, such as the desired print number, to the server.

11

Further, when as a result of the search there is no printer satisfying all requirements of desired print feature selected by the user, the user sends a second list of printers that satisfy a part of the desired print features so as to still allow the user to select the most desirable printer from among the list of printers. Such subject matter is reflected in the claims and is shown as a non-limiting example in Figure 10 in the present specification.

In addition, when sending the information items associated with image forming inherent in the most desirable printer selected by the user to the client computer, the server can also send a layout of control elements such as keys, switches, LEDs and so on in an operating panelboard of the most desirable printer selected by the user. Such features are also reflected for example in the "transmitting means" of claim 46, and as similarly recited in other of the independent claims.

The features reflected in the claims as currently written are believed to clearly distinguish over the applied art.

First, with respect to the primary reference to Kageyama, Kageyama discloses a structure in which a user is required to input at a time of selecting a printer a number of logical features such as a paper size, go/no-go decisions for a PDL and a duplex print, and so on. Based on such user input data a printer search is performed.

Such an operation in Kageyama differs from the claims as currently written. That is, Kageyama does not teach or suggest an operation in which a user need only primarily select desired print features from among a predetermined set of basic print capabilities (again see for example Figure 8 in the present specification as a non-limiting example) and can ultimately select the most desirable printer from a list of printers satisfying the primarily user-selected desired print features, which is prepared through a printer search performed based on the primary selection of the desired print features.

Moreover, Kageyama does not teach or suggest any operation in which a server can transmit to the client computer information items associated with the image forming inherent in the image forming apparatus selected, which as a non-limiting examples may be a layout of control elements such as keys, switches, and LEDs and so on in an operating panelboard of the most desirable printer selected by the user.

Furthermore, in Kageyama a user is required to input logical values of the logical features. That is, a user of the device of Kageyama cannot select the printer if the user does not know the logical values of the logical features. Also, when the user inputs incorrect logical values of the logical features, the user is required to re-input correct values, resulting in a waste of time.

The applicants of the present invention recognized that such systems as in Kageyama suffer from drawbacks. That is, the present applicants recognized that as technological innovation has accelerated on image forming apparatuses such as a printer, new machines are introduced year-by-year and are likely provided with novel printing features. Under such circumstances, it would be difficult for a user to handle a printer searching operation such as in the device of Kageyama that requires the user to input logical values of printing features, since with the system of Kageyama a user would need to learn and remember all the new logical values each time novel printing features were added.

The claimed invention has a contrary structure than as in Kageyama. The claimed invention has a structure in which a user can select a desired printer from among a plurality of printers via server in a network by primarily selecting desired print features from among predetermined basic print capabilities that are indicated to the user. Based on such primary user-selected print features, a search for printers meeting the desired print features from among the plurality of printers is performed by the server. As a result of the search the user receives from the server a first or second list of printers satisfying the desired print features,

and the user can then select a most desirable printer from the first or second list. Such an operation allows a user to select a most desirable printer based on the user's own determined conveniences. As an example, the user may select a printer that is closest to the user, alternatively the user may select a printer that satisfies desired print features, or is ready to use, and so on.

Upon the user's selection of a most desirable printer, the user of the system of the claimed invention can receive from the server information items associated with image forming inherent in the most desirable printer selected by the user, and the user can see such items on a display so that the user can enter user instructions relative to the displayed information items in accordance with the user's desire for printing. Thus, in the claimed invention the user then performs a secondary selection of printing options from the selected printer.

In such ways, two separation operations are executed in the claimed invention. In a first operation a user selects a most desirable printer based on the user's choice of basic desirable printing features that are provided to most of the printers, which for example can include a printing color (i.e., full color or black and white or mono-color), paper size, duplex print, etc. The next step is for the user to select more detailed print instructions relative to the information items associated with image forming inherent in the most desirable printer selected by the user. Such information items can include, as a non-limiting example, selection of print margins and a recording sheet, selection of input trays, selection of output trays, selection of reduction printing, etc.

Such operations in the claimed invention can significantly contribute to convenience of selecting printers by a user while resolving drawbacks such as in systems as in Kageyama. The claimed features are believed to clearly distinguish over the teachings in Kageyama.

14

Moreover, applicants respectfully submit no teachings in the secondary reference to Weinberger can overcome the above-noted deficiencies in Kageyama.

Weinberger merely discloses remotely monitoring statuses of copying machines in real time or in quasi-real time, and also being able to monitor keystrokes at each of the copying machines. However, Weinberger also does not teach or suggest the above-noted operation of searching for printers as disclosed in the claimed invention, which requires an initial operation by a user to input desired print selections, which then provides a user with the list of printers satisfying such print requirements, in which the user can then select a desired printer, and in which the user can additionally then input a secondary print function selection instruction to command the printer to operate. The monitoring of keystrokes on a printer as noted in the Office Action as taught in Weinberger is completely unrelated to such features in the claims as currently written.

In such ways, Weinberger does not overcome any of the above-noted deficiencies in Kageyama.

Moreover, applicants respectfully submit no further teachings in Sugishima or Ooki can overcome the above-noted deficiencies of Kageyama in view of Weinberger. Moreover, applicants also note that in Sugishima when no printer satisfying the requirements of print conditions is found, Sugishima merely provides notification of such an event. That is, Sugishima does not teach or suggest even searching a printer satisfying a part of conditions of requirements of print conditions when no printer satisfying all the requirements of the print condition is found.

In view of these foregoing comments, applicants respectfully submit the claims as currently written distinguish over the applied art.

As no other issues are pending in this application, it is respectfully submitted that the

present application is now in condition for allowance, and it is hereby respectfully requested

that this case be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.

Surinder Sachar

Gregory J. Maier
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 25,599
Surinder Sachar
Registration No. 34,423

Customer Number

22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 06/04)
SNS/rac

I:\ATTY\SNS\0557\05574730\05574730US-AM.DOC

16